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OCI No. 2023/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
13 June 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Security Situation in Iran

1. The early June rioting in Tehran and other cities was sparked by religious reactionary leaders who strongly oppose the Shah's reform program--especially land reform and the emancipation of women. Financial backing probably was obtained from former large landowners and possibly from Egyptian sources.

2. Iranian security forces anticipated trouble during the Moharram period of religious mourning (25 May - 24 June). The riots were set off by the arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini, one of Iran's leading religious leaders and chief agitator against the reforms. The demonstrations were well organized with the apparent intention of causing a complete breakdown of public order. The agitators mobilized a large number of slum elements from South Tehran and bazaar idlers, and anticipated support from student mobs.

3. The city police, with a maximum specialized riot capability of 500, were quickly overwhelmed by the thousands of rioters. Troops were soon committed and at the zenith of the rioting numbered about 13,000. They performed well and showed no hesitancy in firing on the mobs when necessary.

4. Martial law is being rigidly enforced in Tehran and the key agitators have been arrested. The government should have ample military forces in and near the major cities to maintain general order. The security forces have also been alerted to the possibility of trouble in the provinces. The danger of an assassination attempt against the Shah and others has increased, however.

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5. A solution to the problem of tribal insurgency has been brought closer by the assassination of the key leader of the tribal rebels. The forces of the remaining rebel leaders are believed few and scattering, and most tribal chiefs now have submitted to military authorities.

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